DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 317 038 FL 018 326

AUTHOR Luster, Carl
TITLE The Frame Game: A Flexible Conversation Activity.
PUB DATE Apr 89
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages conference (Long Beach, CA, April, 20-23, 1989).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Classroom Communication; *Games; *Media Adaptation; Second Language Instruction; *Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS *Conversation Exercises

ABSTRACT

The Frame Game is a second language conversation activity that allows instructors to determine the content. The activity provides a structure for communication between students and adapts easily to almost any topic. The basic version of the game has been adapted from a management training activity, and is presented along with several variations using classified advertisements, announcements, and capsule reviews taken from newspapers. These activities offer participants the opportunity to practice the vocabulary associated with topics such as American culture, household items, leisure activities, and employment. These activities also offer practice in using language functions such as clarification, description, expression of opinion, agreeing and disagreeing, making and accepting offers, making suggestions, and making invitations. The technique can be further adapted for use with many other topics and materials in order to meet the needs of a wide variety of students and match the resources available to the instructors. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED317038

ABSTRACT

THE FRAME GAME: A FLEXIBLE CONVERSATION ACTIVITY
Carl Luster
American Language Institute, San Diego State University

The Frame Game is a conversation activity which allows instructors to determine the content. It provides a structure for communication between students and adapts easily to almost any topic. The basic version has been adapted from a management training activity and is presented along with several variations using classified advertisements, announcements and capsule reviews taken from newspapers. These activities offer participants the opportunity to practice vocabulary associated with topics such as American culture, household items, leisure activities and employment. They also offer practice in using language functions such as clarification, description, expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, making and accepting offers, making suggestions and making invitations. This technique can be further adapted for use with many other topics and materials to meet the needs of a wide variety of students and match the resources available to their instructors.

Paper presented at the California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages conference (Long Beach, CA, April 20-23, 1989).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

LUSTER, C.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL018326

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE FRAME GAME: A FLEXIBLE CONVERSATION ACTIVITY

Carl Luster
American Language Institute, San Diego State University

The Frame Game is a conversation activity which allows instructors to determine the content. It provides a structure for communication between students and adapts easily to almost any topic. It has been used as a management training activity, and the following version has been adapted from J. E. Eitington's The Winning Trainer (Gulf Publishing Company, 1984, pages 81-82).

FRAME GAME: The Basic Version

Materials

1. Prepare five index cards (or five slips of paper) for each participant. Each card should have statements about the United States or Americans typed on it. It is not necessary to have five different statements for each participant, but there should be 20 or 30 different statements. Include statements you have heard students make about the U.S., other statements the participants are likely to agree with, statements the participants are likely to reject and statements the participants may feel ambiguous about:

Americans are very friendly.
Americans are not very friendly.
Americans are friendly on the surface, but they are hard to get to know well.
Americans openly express their feelings.
Americans are reserved.
The United States is a very rich country.
The United States has many poor and homeless people.
United States businesses aren't able to compete with foreign competition.
The United States is a very large country.
The United States is very crowded.
The United States has a lot of crime.
The United States is a safe place to live.
Living in the United States is expensive.
Living in the United States is not expensive.
Transportation in the United States is poor.
Transportation in the United States is good.
You can't live in the United States without a car.
Many races and nationalities live together peacefully in the United States.
The United States should open its borders to more foreign immigrants.
The United States should work harder to stop illegal immigration.
The United States is the most powerful nation in the world.
The United States is losing power in the world.
Divorce is common in the United States.

American families are falling apart.
American families are very close and supportive.

Alternatively, the participants can write their own statements on the cards.

2. Prepare a similar batch of cards for the front of the room, mixing the different types of statements.

In Class

1. Give each participant five cards.
2. Participants read their cards and group them into two piles: likes (statements they agree with) and dislikes (statements they disagree with). (Allow five minutes)
3. Participants find partners and try to trade their worst cards for better ones, circulating around the room to speak with as many other participants as possible. They must give a reason for giving up or taking a particular card. Also, they can read or paraphrase their cards to other participants, but they cannot show their cards to other participants or look at other participants' cards.
4. Participants can get a new card from the batch at the front of the room after every two or more exchanges, but may only take the top card, putting discards on the bottom of the stack.
5. After thirty minutes, or when things start getting quiet again, participants form groups of three or four to agree on the five "best" cards.
6. After five or ten minutes, ask individuals from the groups to report on the cards their groups chose as "best" and the cards they rejected.

VARIATIONS

The basic version of the Frame Game can be used with statements on any topic so long as participants hold a variety of opinions about the statements. This works well for higher level students who have the vocabulary and oral fluency to express their opinions about the topic, but the technique of distributing many small pieces of information among participants and having each particiant search for the most appealing piece of information can be adapted for lower level students as well.

As in the following examples, content for variations of the Frame Game can come from classified advertisements and announcements and capsule reviews taken from newspapers. These are taped, one each, to index cards or simply distributed to participants. Participants may read or paraphrase their cards to other participants, but they may not show their cards to other participants or look at other participants' cards. Also, before making an exchange, participants must give a reason for giving up or taking a particular card.

TYPE I

For the following variations, prepare extra cards for the table at the front of the room. Participants can get new cards from the table after every two or more exchanges, taking the top card and putting discards on the bottom of the stack.

SWAP MEET

Materials

1. Classified advertisements for various merchandise (furniture, clothes, bicycles, etc.)
2. Phoney money

In Class

1. Give each participant five cards and a small amount of phoney money.
2. Participants circulate around the room, trading the items they have for items they feel are better, using phoney money to make up for differences in perceived value. Simple cash purchases are not allowed.

MATCHMAKER

Materials

Lonely hearts ads from the personals section of the classifieds (Make sure that each ad has at least one possible "match" among the other ads.)

In Class

1. Give each participant two cards that don't "match."
2. Participants circulate around the room as matchmakers, describing the clients on their cards.
3. When two participants agree that two of their clients are compatible, they exchange cards, but the participant with the matched cards continues to look for a better prospect until almost all of the participants have two matched cards.

TYPE II

For the following variations, prepare a blank appointment calendar for one week. Participants keep track of planned activities, making sure that they don't schedule two activities for the same time. Ads are not exchanged, and there is no batch of cards for the front of the room.

LIESURE TIME

Materials

1. Recreation announcements (for fairs, meetings, concerts, lectures, sporting events, etc.) from the Calendar or Currents section of a newspaper
2. Appointment calendars

In Class

1. Give each participant one announcement and an appointment calendar.
2. Participants circulate around the room, describing the activity in their announcement to other participants, listening to other participants' descriptions and planning their itineraries for the week.

WILL YOU GO OUT WITH ME?

Materials

1. Capsule reviews of movies or restaurants from the Calendar or Currents section of a newspaper
2. Appointment Calendars

In Class

1. Give each participant one review and an appointment calendar.
2. Participants circulate around the room inviting other participants to go to the movies or restaurants in their reviews, accepting or rejecting invitations and planning their itineraries for the week.

TYPE III

For the following variations, half of the participants are given classified advertisements. These participants are stationed around the room at tables or desks. There is no batch of cards at the front of the room.

JOB HUNTING

Materials

1. Employment advertisements
2. Slips of paper with qualifications, income and work requirements, each slip matching at least one advertisement

In Class

1. Applicants with varying qualifications, income and work requirements circulate from station to station for interviews.
2. When the interviews are finished, employers announce their choices of employees.
3. Salaries can be negotiated after employers have made their choices.

HOUSE HUNTING

Materials

1. House and apartment rental advertisements of various types, prices and locations
2. Slips of paper with housing requirements (family size, apartment versus house, transportation needs, etc.) and varying monthly housing budgets, each slip matching at least one advertisment

In Class

1. Tenants, with varying housing requirements and budgets, circulate from station to station, interviewing landords and being interviewed by landlords, perhaps even filling out applications and negotiating rent.
2. The landlords announce their choices of tenants, and tenants accept or refuse.

USED CAR SHOPPING

Materials

1. Used car advertisements
2. Phoney money

In Class

1. Buyers, with varying amounts of phoney money, negotiate with sellers over the price of the car.
2. Deals can be made before the end of the game. New owners immediately become sellers, and sellers immediately begin looking for another car.

CONCLUSION

These activities offer participants the opportunity to practice vocabulary associated with topics such as American culture, household items, leisure activities and employment. They also offer practice in using language functions such as clarification, description, expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, making and accepting offers, making suggestions and making invitations. This technique of distributing many small pieces of information among participants and having each particiant search for the most appealing piece of information can be further adapted for use with many other topics and materials to meet the needs of a wide variety of students and match the resources available to their instructors.

December 1, 1989

Acquisitions Coordinator
ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics
1118 22nd St., NW
Washington, DC 20037

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for your interest in my presentation at the CATESOL '89 State Conference in Long Beach. Enclosed is a copy of my paper for inclusion in the ERIC database and a completed Reproduction Release form. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Carl Luster

Carl Luster
American Language Institute
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-1900

(619) 594-4143